

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TAIPEI 00245 111038Z

46

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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R 110855Z JAN 74

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 633

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 0245

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, CH, TW

SUBJECT: ROC COMMENT ON PRC MILITARY SHAKEUP

REF: HONG KONG 0002

1. SUMMARY. LOCAL ANALYSIS OF PRC MILITARY SHAKEUP HAS FOCUSED ON STRUGGLE AGAINST CHOU EN-LAI, INCREASED POWER FOR CHIANG CHING FACTION, CONCERTED ATTEMPT BY MAO TO ELIMINATE "MOUNTAINTOPISM", FACTIONALISM IN PLA, AND (IN CONTRAS) POLITICAL NEUTRALITY OF MILITARY COMMANDERS. ANALYSIS STRESSES MAO'S LESS THAN SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO REASSERT CCP CENTRALIZED CONTROL OVER REGIONAL COMMANDS, MAO'S MANEUVERING TO NURTURE CHIANG CHING FACTION PROTEGES AS SUCCESSORS, AND THUS PRECARIOUSNESS OF CHOU EN-LAI'S POSITION. OFFICIALS HAVE SPECULATED THAT POSSIBLE NEXT STEP WILL BE APPOINTMENT OF YEH CHIEN-YING AS DEFENSE MINISTER AND SU CHEN-HUA AS CHIEF OF GENERAL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TAIPEI 00245 111038Z

STAFF. END SUMMARY.

2. LOCAL PRESS COMMENT ON SHIFT OF PRC REGIONAL COMMANDERS

HAS FOCUSED ON STRUGGLE AGAINST CHOU EN-LAI, MORE POWER FOR THE CHIANG CHING GROUP ("THE PALACE CLIQUE"), POLITICAL NEUTRALITY OF MILITARY LEADERS, AND A CONCERTED ATTEMPT BY THE CENTER TO ELIMINATE "MOUNTAIN TOPISM". OFFICIAL VIEW OF EVENTS IS CONTAINED IN JAN 4 CHUNG KUO SHIH PAO ARTICLE ENTITLED "WHY DID THE MAOISTS UNDERTAKE A MAJOR MILITARY SHAKEUP?" BASED ON ANALYSIS PREPARED BY KMT MAINLAND OPERATIONS DIRECTOR HUS CHING-LAN WHICH HAS BEEN CIRCULATED TO SENIOR ROC GOVERNMENT AND PARTY OFFICIALS.

3. SHIH PAO ATTRIBUTED ANALYSIS TO UNNAMED EXPERT AND CONCLUDED THAT SHAKEUP WAS INITIATED BY MAO TSE-TUNG AND TO REDUCE FACTIONALISM AND AUTONOMY OF ENTRENCHED PLA COMMANDERS, AND TO REASSERT CCP CENTRALIZED CONTROL OVER MILITARY LEADERSHIP WHICH HAD ACCUMULATED UNPRECEDENTED POWER SINCE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. SAW NEXT STEP AS PROBABLE APPOINTMENT OF YEH CHIEN-YING AS DEFENSE MINISTER AND SU CHEN-HUA AS CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF. YEH, WAS DESCRIBED AS NEITHER HIGHLY CAPABLE NOR AMBITIOUS, WHILE SU, WHO ONCE SERVED AS NAVY POLITICAL COMMISSAR, WAS PORTRAYED AS REHABILITATED CULTURAL REVOLUTION PURGEE.

4. SHAKEUP WAS ALSO VIEWED AS MAO MANEUVER ON BEHALF OF CHIANG CHING FACTION IN ORDER TO NURTURE CHANG CHUN-CHIAO, YAO WEN-YUAN, WANG HUNG-WEN, ETAL AS SUCCESSORS WHILE STILL ABLE TO DO SO. SHIH PAO CITED NEW NORTHEAST MILITARY DISTRICT COMMANDER LI TEH-SHENG AS SPECIALLY FAVORED PROTEGE OF CHIANG CHING, AND NOTED ORGANIZATION OF "CITY MILITIA" IN MAJOR CITIES SINCE LAST SEPTEMBER AS CULTURAL REVOLUTION FACTION EFFORT AIMED AT CHECKING PLA INFLUENCE.

5. YANG TEH-CHIH, TING SHENG AND PI TING-CHUN (NEW COMMANDERS RESPECTIVELY OF THE HUNAN, NANKING AND FUCHOW MILITARY DISTRICTS) WERE DESCRIBED AS TRUSTED MAO LIEUTENANTS AND AS GAINERS. COMMANDERS VIEWED AS DEMOTED WERE TSENG SZU-YU AND HAN CHU, BOTH DESCRIBED AS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TAIPEI 00245 111038Z

CLOSE ASSOCIATES OF LIN PIAO. LITTLE DISCUSSION OF ARTICLE OFFERED NO VIEWS ON CHEN HSI-LIEN AND HSU SHIH-YU SHIFTS. SHIH PAO ANALYSIS CONCLUDED THAT MILITARY REARRANGEMENT IS DISADVANTAGEOUS TO CHOU EN-LAI AND THAT "CURTAIN OF STRUGGLE AGAINST CHOU HAS BEGUN TO RISE." LOOKING FURTHER INTO FUTURE, ARTICLE PREDICTED POWER STRUGGLE AMONG MAO'S TRUSTED AIDES

AFTER HIS DEATH; THIS WOULD MARK COMING OF  
COMMUNIST REGIME'S TOTAL COLLAPSE.

6. CHUNG YANG JIH PAO JAN 7 EDITORIAL, MORE PATENTLY  
PROPAGANDISTIC THAN SHIH PAO ANALYSIS, CLAIMED THAT  
MAO HOPED TO ELIMINATE ALL LOCAL MILITARY COMMANDERS  
IN A SINGLE STROKE. FACT THAT HE COULD SUCCEED ONLY  
IN RESHUFFLING THEM DEMONSTRATED WEAK PEKING CONTROL  
OVER MILITARY. EDITORIAL ALSO COMMENTED THAT PURPOSE  
OF SHAKEUP WAS TO PAVE THE WAY FOR FOURTH NATIONAL  
PEOPLES CONGRESS UNDER CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD ALLOW  
CULTURAL REVOLUTION FACTION TO DOMINATE SESSION.

7. ANOTHER ANGLE WAS EXAMINED BY CHUNG HUA JIH PAO  
IN JAN 4 EDITORIAL. NOTING THAT NONE OF THE POLITICAL  
COMMISSARS HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED OUT OF THEIR PRESENT  
ASSIGNMENTS, PAPER CONCLUDED THAT MAO INTENDS TO  
RESTORE POLITICAL COMMISSAR SYSTEM TO ITS FORMER  
PROMINENCE IN PLA.

8. HSIN SHENG PAO TOOK A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT TACK FROM  
OTHER EDITORIALS, CLAIMING THAT MILITARY POWER  
HOLDERS REMAIN NEUTRAL IN POLITICAL STRUGGLES.  
MILITARY LEADERS DID NOT DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT OR  
OPPOSITION DURING LIU SHAO-CHI-  
LIN PAIO STRUGGLE, AND " IT IS UNLIKELY THEY WILL  
SHOW LOYALTY OR HOSTILITY TO CHIANG CHING OR  
CHOU EN-LAI IN THE FUTURE." WHILE CONCURRING WITH  
MOST OTHER COMMENTARIES THAT REGIONALISM AND POLITICAL  
INFIGHTING AT THE CENTER WILL CONTINUE, EDITORIAL  
DEPARTED FROM OTHERS IN CONCEDED THAT GAINERS AND  
LOSERS IN PRESENT STRUGGLE CANNOT YET BE DISCERNED.

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PAGE 04 TAIPEI 00245 111038Z

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## Message Attributes

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